

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

The following listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application.

LISTING OF CLAIMS

1. (currently amended) A vacuum cleaner comprising:
 - a housing;
 - a motor disposed with said housing for generating a vacuum air flow;
 - a removable dust collection module carried by said housing;
 - a latching mechanism for detachably securing said removable dust collection module to said housing, said latching mechanism comprising:
 - (i) a latch member that can move from a first position in which, in use, it can engage part of the vacuum cleaner housing to a second position in which, in use, it is free from the [vacuum cleaner] housing; and
 - (ii) a release member that is movable, in use, relative to the latch member, the movement causing the latch member to move from its said first position to said second position;
 - (iii) the latch member includes an elongate member having a resilient biasing portion that provides a biasing force tending to urge the latching mechanism towards said first position; and
 - ~~(iii)~~ (iv) the latch member further including two end housing engagement portions that are urged into locking engagement with said housing by said biasing force from said resilient biasing portion member.

2. (cancelled)

3. (cancelled)

4. (cancelled)

5. (previously presented) The locking mechanism according to claim 4, wherein the end housing-engagement portions are urged away from each other by the biasing force of the resilient portion.

6. (previously presented) The vacuum cleaner according to claim 3, wherein the release member can be moved relative to the latch member to provide a force acting against the biasing force of the biasing portion of the latch member to thereby release the dust collection module from the housing.

7. (previously presented) The vacuum cleaner according to claim 1, wherein the release member is moveable, in use, from a first release-member-position in which it is in contact with the latch member, to a second release-member-position in which it is not in contact with the latch member; and

wherein the release member is movable relative to the latch member such that when the release member is in said first release-member-position, where it is in contact with the latch member, then the latch member is in its second position in which it is free from the said housing.

8. (original) A locking mechanism according to claim 7, wherein the release member is movable relative to the latch member such that when the release member is in the said first release-member-position where it is in contact with the latch member then the latch member is in its second position in which it is free from the housing part.

9. (previously presented) The vacuum cleaner according to claim 1, wherein the release member is provided with at least one cam surface; and
wherein the latch member is provided with a corresponding cam surface.

10. (previously presented) The locking mechanism according to claim 9 wherein the latch member is provided with a corresponding cam surface

11. (previously presented) The vacuum cleaner according to claim 9, wherein the cam surfaces can slide over each other to effect said movement of the latch member from its said first position to said second position.

12. (previously presented) The vacuum cleaner according to claim 9, wherein the release member comprises two cam surfaces, and the latch member comprises two, end, housing-engagement portions, each of which is provided with a cam surface shaped to correspond with respective ones of the cam surface on the release member.

13. (previously presented) The vacuum cleaner according to claim 9, wherein said at least one cam surface on the release member is provided with a bearing, and said cam surface of the latch member is provided with a recess shaped to co-operate in a friction fit with said bearing.

14. (cancelled)

15. (cancelled)

16. (previously presented) The vacuum cleaner according to claim 1, wherein the latch member of the locking mechanism is at least partly contained within the dust collection module.

17. (previously presented) The vacuum cleaner according to claim 16, wherein said partial containment of the latch member relative to the dust collection module is effected by at least one inwardly directed flange that projects from an inwardly facing surface of the dust collection module.

18. (cancelled)

19. (cancelled)

20. (previously presented) The vacuum cleaner according to claim 9, further comprising a backing plate positioned so as to locate the release member between itself and the dust collection module; and

wherein the backing plate is positioned so as to provide a channel in which the release member can slide.

21. (cancelled)

22. (previously presented) The vacuum cleaner according to claim 20, wherein the backing plate is at least partly contained within the dust collection module; and

wherein the latch member is contained within the dust collection module adjacent one surface thereof, and part of the backing plate is positioned substantially to prevent movement of the latch member further into the dust collection module.

23. (cancelled)

24. (previously presented) The vacuum cleaner according to claim 22, wherein the latch member comprises an elongate member, and the release member is contained within the dust collection module so that it can move relative thereto in a direction that is substantially perpendicular to said latch member.

25. (previously presented) The vacuum cleaner according to claim 1, wherein:
the dust collection module comprises an air inlet;
the release member also acts as an air inlet closure member; and
movement of the release member relative to the latch member also moves
the release member relative to the dust collection module and acts simultaneously to close
a first air flow path into the dust collection module and open a second air flow path, that is
remote from the first air flow path, into the dust collection module.

26. (cancelled)

27. (previously presented) The vacuum cleaner according to claim 1, wherein
the dust collection module comprises two air inlets and the release member comprises a
shuttle member containing first and second openings; and
whereby movement of the release member relative to the latch member
causes the release member to move relative to said air inlets of the dust collection module
so that in a first position the first, but not the second, air inlet of the dust collection module
is in register with the first opening, and in a second position the second, but not the first, air
inlet of the dust collection module is in register with the second opening.

28. (previously presented) The vacuum cleaner according to claim 27, wherein the release member can be moved relative to said air inlets so that in the first position the first air inlet of the dust collection module is in register with the first opening but the second air inlet of the dust collection module is not in register with either of said openings, and in a second position the second air inlet of the dust collection module is in register with the second opening, but the first air inlet of the dust collection module is not in register with either of said openings.

29. (cancelled)

30. (cancelled)

31. (cancelled)

32. (previously presented) A vacuum cleaner comprising:
a floor engaging housing;
a motor disposed within said housing for generating a vacuum air flow;
a dust collection module removably supported by the housing and forming a portion of an airflow path through the housing;
a latch member operably associated with said dust collection module for securing said dust collection module to said housing such that said dust collection module cannot be removed from said housing; and
a release member movable into a first position, wherein the release member assists in forming a first airflow path into said dust collection module and

engages said latch member to move said latch member into an unlocked position, whereby said dust collection module can be removed from said housing; and

said release member being movable from said first position to a second position, wherein said release member assists in forming a second airflow path, separate from said first airflow path, into said dust collection module and causes said latch member to be urged into a locked position, thereby preventing removal of said dust collection module from said housing.

33. (previously presented) The vacuum cleaner of claim 32, wherein said latch member comprises a pair of end housing-engagement portions and a biasing element, said end housing-engagement portions engaging said housing when said release member is moved into said second position.

34. (previously presented) The vacuum cleaner of claim 32, wherein movement of said release member from said first position into said second position causes said first airflow path to be obstructed; and

wherein movement of said release member from said second position into said first position causes said second airflow path to be obstructed.

35. (previously presented) For a vacuum cleaner, a dust collection module adapted to be carried by a housing of the vacuum cleaner, said dust collection module comprising:

a dust bowl adapted to be placed in an opening in said housing;

a latch member carried by said dust bowl for engaging with a portion of said housing to hold said dust bowl secured to said housing; and

a release member carried by said housing adjacent said latch member and movable slidably between a first position, wherein said release member engages said latch member to unlatch said dust bowl from said housing, whereby said dust bowl can be removed from said housing, and a second position wherein said release member allows said latch member to engage said housing, thereby preventing said dust bowl from being removed from said housing.

36. (previously presented) The dust collection module of claim 35, wherein said latch member comprises a pair of end housing-engagement portions and a spring.

37. (previously presented) The dust collection module of claim 35, wherein said release member assists in forming first and second spaced apart airflow paths into said dust bowl.

38. (previously presented) The dust collection module of claim 37, wherein said second airflow path is obstructed by said release member when said release member is in said first position; and

wherein said first airflow path is obstructed by said release member when said release member is in said second position.

39. (currently amended) A method for forming a vacuum cleaner, comprising:
providing a housing having an opening;
providing a motor disposed within the housing for generating a vacuum air flow within through a suction nozzle in fluid communication with the housing;
placing a dust collection module within the opening in said housing;
using a latch member to removably secure said dust collection module in said housing;
using a slidably linearly moveable release member to automatically urge said latch member into a locked position when said release member is in a first position, and to allow said latch member to be released from locking engagement with said housing when said release member is moved into a second position; and
using said slidably moveable release member to provide a first airflow opening into said dust collection module when said release member is in said first position, and a separate, second airflow opening into said dust collection module when said release member is in said second position.

40. cancelled.

41. (currently amended) The method of claim 40 39, further comprising:
using said slidably moveable release member to block said first airflow opening when said slidably moveable release member is in said second position, and to block said second airflow opening when said release member is in said first position.

42. (currently amended) The method of claim 40 39, further comprising disposing said slidable removable release member within said dust collection module.

43. (previously presented) A vacuum cleaner comprising:
a housing;
a motor disposed within said housing for generating a vacuum air flow;
a removable dust collection module carried by said housing;
a latching mechanism for detachably said removable dust collection module to said housing, the latching mechanism including:

a latch member that can move from a first position in which, in use, it engages part of the vacuum cleaning housing, to a second position in which, in use, it is free from the housing;

a release member that is moveable, in use, relative to the latch member, the movement causing latch member to move from its said first position to said second position;

wherein the release member is provided with at least one cam surface; and

wherein the latch member is provided with the corresponding cam surface.

44. (previously presented) A vacuum cleaner comprising:
- a housing;
 - a motor disposed within said housing for generating a vacuum air flow;
 - a removable dust collection module carried by said housing;
 - a latching mechanism for detachable securing said removable dust collection module to said housing, the latching mechanism comprising:

- a latch member that can move from a first position in which, in use, it engages part of the vacuum cleaner housing to a second position in which, in use, it is free from the housing;

- a release member that is movable, in use relative to the latch member, the movement causing the latch member to move from its said first position to said second position; and

- wherein the latch member of the locking mechanism is at least partially contained with the dust collection module.